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SIPDIS

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FOR DRL/MLA AND L/HRR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: DRAFT DECLARATION ON RIGHTS OF  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

REF: STATE 78740

¶1. Poloff and Mr. Richard Levy, Second Secretary of the Australian High Commission, delivered reftel demarche on June 23 to Mr. Edward Ogbonna, Acting Director of Second United Nations Division of the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Ogbonna had little knowledge of the draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP), but agreed to review the materials provided and to pass the information to his director (who was in Geneva attending the opening of the UN Human Rights Council.) Mr. Ogbonna agreed with the USG/Australian position that Chair's text could prove problematic for an ethnically diverse polity such as Nigeria.

It was easy to think of Nigerian regions with restive ethnic groups which could seek to break away if given an unqualified right of self-determination by the DRIP (i.e. Biafra, Bakassi, the Niger Delta). He indicated Nigeria would not likely support any action on the DRIP in Geneva or at UNGA if (upon further review) the Chair's text proved as problematic as we claimed.

¶2. Action Request: Mr. Ogbonna implied that the Nigerian missions in Geneva and New York would take the lead on the DRIP, should it be raised at the HRC or UNGA. Therefore, post recommends that U.S. missions in those locales raise the DRIP with their Nigerian counterparts to ensure that the key decision-makers are aware of the serious problems the DRIP could pose for Nigeria.

FUREY